

THE LIGUORIAN



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THIS IS THE LATEST

"Do not know how many read it after I give it to a friend,
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THE LIGUORIAN

*A Popular Monthly Magazine According to the Spirit of St. Alphonsus Liguori
Devoted to the Growth of Catholic Belief and Practice*

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JULY, 1928

No. 7

Mourning

Moan on, my sad and silent spirit moan,
Though thronging thoughts tempt thee to dark despair.
Voice not in tears thy sobbing sorrow's groan
Though bitter be thy cross and hard to bear.

Long is the roll of noble martyred men,
But brief their fight that won undying fame:
Mayhap in thee a martyr lives again
To suffer more than death for Jesus' Name.

True martyrdom is often not to die,
But bravely live and fight on smiling still,
To suffer deep, yet stifle sob and sigh,
To cheerful bow beneath God's Holy Will.

Not then by dint of torture deep and dire,
Is oft the crown of hidden sainthood won:
To Heaven's heights the humblest may aspire,
Who learns to pray "O Lord Thy Will be done!"

—James Smiley, C. Ss.R.

Father Tim Casey

THE WISDOM OF HER LAWS

C. D. McENNIRY, C.Ss.R.

Father Casey adjusted his spectacles and sat down at the table to examine the pile of documents which his visitor, Paul Barrow, had spread out before him.

"Here, Father," explained Barrow, "is the additional information which you instructed me to secure in reference to the first marriage of my wife, Sylvia. I hope at last you will find it satisfactory. This whole business has dragged out so long that I am sick of it," he added petulantly.

A tired sigh escaped the priest's lips. Matters like this were among the most thankless and trying of his priestly duties. Headstrong young people would ignore the warnings of the priest and walk shamelessly into matrimonial tangles, then come afterwards and throw upon him the whole distasteful task of extricating them from the web of their own weaving. Nay, more, they would even criticize and censure him if the laws and the facts were not to their liking. It was weary, weary work. However, Father Casey swallowed his disgust and set briskly to the business before him.

"Splendid, Paul. Let us see what you have found. I will help you run down every clue, and, if anything can be done to legalize your marriage with Sylvia, trust me to do it. But remember," he cautioned, "I am not stirring up any false hopes. You deliberately took a woman who, to all appearances, was another man's wife. It will be only an accident if the event proves that she is not."

"You told me to get definite and well authenticated data on four points," the young man began. "I have done so, and I find: first, Sylvia's Baptism in the Catholic Church took place before her first marriage; secondly, her first husband was a baptized Methodist; third, the mining town in Colorado, where they were married, lies on the north bank of the Arkansas River; fourth, the date of their marriage was Jan. 15, 1908."

Taking the papers, Father Casey studied them one by one, while Barrow waited in suspense. Finally he shuffled them together and handed them sadly back to his visitor.

"Sylvia," he said, "is validly married to her first husband. I had thought there might still be some flaw, but, from the evidence you have just submitted, I see there is none."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Do? What any honest man would do, who finds that he is living with the wife of another."

"Leave her? Never," cried the young man.

"Nobody will force you—not even Almighty God, who respects the free will He has given you. But you know the sentence He has pronounced against all that live in wilful adultery," quietly returned the priest.

"But she has been divorced from her first husband for years. I married her before the judge. Bless our marriage, and let us live in peace with God."

"You know full well that no civil divorce can ever break a lawful marriage. You did *not* marry her before the judge. You pretended to do so, yet, all along, you were thoroughly convinced that it was only an empty and meaningless ceremony. All the judges in the world are powerless to unite you in lawful wedlock with Sylvia while she has a living husband."

"Why can't you have the Church annul her first marriage?"

"Because the Church cannot do it. A complete Christian marriage never was and never will be annulled. It is absolutely indissoluble."

"The Church has done it for others, why can't she do it for me?"

"She has done it for no one. On the contrary, she has allowed whole kingdoms to leave the fold rather than prove recreant to the law of her Divine Master, who made the Christian home permanent and Christian marriage indissoluble."

"I do not exactly mean," explained Barrow, "that she has broken a valid marriage, but she has—has—has done something to make a second marriage possible."

"She has declared certain marriages invalid, which, of course, has left the parties free to contract a valid marriage with that partner or with any other," replied the priest.

"Since she has done for others, why will she not do the same for me?"

"She has done it for others, because, in their case, the first marriage

was invalid. She will not do it for you because, in your case, the first marriage was valid."

"Why was their first marriage invalid?"

"Because it violated some law necessary for validity."

"Why will she not do it in my case?"

"Because in your case, the first marriage did not violate any law necessary for validity."

"But, in both cases, the first marriage was valid according to the State."

"The State has no more power to determine what is necessary for the validity of the sacrament of marriage than it has to determine what is necessary for the validity of the sacrament of Baptism."

"You say it would be different if Sylvia or her first husband had not been baptized? In that case I could validly marry her?"

"If one had been baptized and the other not, the marriage would have been invalid, and, since she would then be free, you could marry her."

"Or if they had contracted marriage before a judge on the south side of the Arkansas River instead of the north?"

"Yes, in that case their marriage would have been invalid."

"Or if they had been married at the end of 1908 instead of at the beginning?"

"Yes."

"That is unfair. That is hair-splitting."

"Sound and sane legislation is not hair-splitting."

"I don't get your meaning."

"If the civil laws, relative to the validity of contracts, state precisely whom they bind, where they bind, and when they bind, would you call that hair-splitting?"

"No, I would not call that hair-splitting. It is necessary; otherwise we should have endless confusion, and nobody could know whether he had a clear title to his property or not."

"You would rather call it sound and sane legislation, would you not?"

"Yes," replied Barrow.

"Now, my boy," continued the priest, "if it is necessary that you have a clear title to your property, it is far more imperative that you have a clear title to your wife. The Church takes care of that. When

she frames laws relative to the contract of matrimony, she states very clearly whom they bind, where they bind, and when they bind. In other words, she follows the principles of sound and sane legislation."

"I'm all up in the air about this whole business of laws regulating contracts," muttered Barrow. "What would happen if there were no such laws? Wouldn't there be any contracts?"

"If the State, which has jurisdiction over civil contracts, made no laws in the matter, then every time two men would agree to a civil contract, that contract would be valid without witnesses, documents, or formalities of any kind."

"That would not be so good," commented Barrow, "too much room for uncertainty and fraud."

"In like manner," Father Casey went on, "if the Church, which has jurisdiction over sacred contracts, made no laws in the matter, every time a free man and woman consented to become man and wife, the sacramental contract would be valid without any further formalities."

"I wonder if we should not all be better off if there were no marriage laws. When a man and woman accept each other as husband and wife, let them be husband and wife, and not bother about all these minute conditions and qualifications."

"Suppose," suggested the priest, "a man says to a woman, 'I take you for my wife.' The woman smiles, but says nothing. Would you consider it a marriage? She has given tacit consent."

"No, I think both ought to express consent in order to avoid uncertainty."

"And so you would want at least one law—a law stating that both parties must express their consent in order to have a valid marriage. But now, suppose a boy and girl of fourteen or even of twelve should agree to become man and wife."

"Oh, that would never do," cried Barrow. "They are too young to choose a life partner."

"Then you would want another law—a law fixing exactly the age at which they could contract a valid marriage. Again, there is the question of proof. Since you require no witnesses, what would you do when the woman would say they were married and the man would say they were not? Would you allow him to desert her and marry another?"

"I think, in order to prevent deception or fraud, the marriage should be contracted in the presence of witnesses."

"One, or two, or how many?" queried the priest.

"For such an important contract there should be at least two witnesses."

"Then you would want a law for that? And what about relatives? Would you allow cousins to marry? Or brothers and sisters?"

"Oh, surely not?"

"Not even third cousins?"

"Third cousins would be all right; maybe even second cousins."

"Don't you see," urged the priest, "you cannot have any 'maybe' in a matter of this kind? They must be certainly married or certainly not married. You would need a law stating definitely how far relationship invalidates an attempted marriage."

"Father Casey, I give up—let the Church go ahead and frame her laws. But I cannot see why she should make the validity of marriage depend upon such petty things—whether this one is baptized and the other not—whether the ceremony took place on this side of the river or the other side—whether it was the beginning of the year or the end of the year."

"I will tell you why you cannot see all this."

"Why?"

"Because your mind is too puny to look beyond your own narrow horizon. You are not big enough to imagine circumstances different from those in which you happen to be placed here and now. Try to broaden your outlook. Just keep in mind the fact that the Church has existed for two thousand years. Stupendous changes have taken place in the world during that time. Yet always the Church has proved herself a spiritual mother to men. She has understood them; she has kept in intimate touch with them; she has wisely governed them. Her doctrines, of course, never change, for they are the doctrines of Christ committed to her keeping; but her laws change, as prudent laws should do, to meet the needs of changing conditions. For instance, she saw, at one time, that immense harm was done to souls by marriage between Christians and infidels. She made a law against such marriages. Whoever is baptized is a Christian; whoever is not baptized is an infidel. That is why a marriage between a baptized person and an unbaptized person was invalid. Again, she found that innocent persons were often wronged through secret marriages. She accordingly made a law against secret marriages, and she defined exactly what she meant by a secret

marriage—any marriage not contracted before the pastor and two witnesses. But, in those times, it would take years before the knowledge of that law reached all parts of the world. As a wise lawgiver she took measures to avert all uncertainty. She decreed that the law would begin to bind within the limits of each parish from the time it was published in that parish. Now it happened that the Arkansas River was the boundary of the old Spanish Colony and also of the old Spanish parish to the south. The law was published there, and secret marriages were invalid there. There was no parish to the north, and the law was never published there. That law was published four hundred years ago. Since then the frontiers of nations have changed; means of communication have changed; centers of civilization have changed. The Church saw at length that it would be prudent to make a slight change in this law. She accordingly decreed that the law against secret marriages should henceforth hold everywhere and not merely in the parishes in which it had been promulgated. At the same time she restricted the law to persons baptized in the Catholic Church, no longer including all baptized persons as formerly. She also set the date on which this universal law was to go into effect, Easter Sunday, April 19, 1908."

"Father, you said that the Church exempted baptized Protestants from this new law. Has the Catholic Church anything at all to say about the marriage of Protestants?"

"The Catholic Church is the Church founded by Christ. To her He committed the seven sacraments which He instituted. She has everything to say about them. Therefore, whoever tries to receive a sacrament, whether he be a loyal member or a protesting member, must comply with the regulations the Church has laid down for that sacrament, unless the Church expressly exempts him."

"But at least," urged Barrow, "Protestants are married, even though their marriage is not a sacrament."

"Since the time Christ raised Christian marriage to the dignity of a sacrament," returned the priest, "there is no such thing as valid marriage for Christians, that is, for baptized persons, except the sacramental union, the sacrament of matrimony."

"I see I have been saying a lot of foolish things against the Church because I was really ignorant of her problems and of her wise way of handling them," said Barrow.

"That is generally the reason why impulsive children criticize this prudent old Mother," said Father Casey.

Sword and Cross

GENERAL LOUIS GASTON DE SONIS

AUG. T. ZELLER, C.Ss.R.

"Pray for me," wrote de Sonis to one of his friends. "I am only a poor soldier; but I hope I am one of those of the old days when ours was called the 'noble profession of arms,' because those arms were wielded by Christian hands."

"If my boys are to follow my career," he writes to his wife, "may they understand their profession as their ancestors did; and that is, that it is a series of acts of devotion to duty, of detachment from the perishable things of this world, and of mortification in every sense of the word."

These few lines give us an idea of the noble, idealistic view Gaston de Sonis took of his chosen state in life. He aimed to be a great soldier, a loyal Frenchman, but above all, a true Christian; and it was because he was so true and fervent a Christian, that he became all the greater as a soldier and all the more loyal as a Frenchman.

This becomes evident throughout his career, as he progressed from the ranks to the high office of General, and that despite the anti-Christian character of the French Government of the time.

General de Sonis' life was one of constant changes and constant dangers. It was a soldier's life from beginning to end. To chart it according to his successive commands and campaigns would scarcely give an idea of its hardships. His first commission was to Castres, then Pontivy, then Limoges: this completed his apprenticeship, for these were years of peace.

IN TIME OF PEACE

During these years he devoted himself very much to the study of military history. He also made it a point to read works on philosophy and religion. Of this he writes somewhat whimsically, referring to the sacrifice he had to make to gain time:

"I have access to some excellent libraries here (Limoges), where I can get as many books as I want. But to be able to read steadily, I have given up my painting. I only made sketches anyway, and what sketches! Perhaps I should never have been able to do anything better, though such is the vanity of man that I have some difficulty in persuading myself of this fact!"

This was but a small sacrifice, if you will, but it seems to indicate his judgment of the right order of things and the resoluteness of his spirit. Another evidence of this was his joining the St. Vincent de Paul Society at this time. It revealed besides a trait of his character—his love for his fellowmen—which later on proved one of the most winning characteristics of his authority and rule over others. It was his constant purpose to make his days full days, filled with the best and most useful occupations.

De Sonis did not join as an honorary member. Whatever he undertook, he did with his whole soul. So at once he distinguished himself by his devoted and self-sacrificing charities. He attended the conferences regularly; he delighted in visiting the sick; he would sit by their bedside, find out their wants, console them in body and soul, give his money and everything he had to bring them relief. He even went into debt for them.

This is what he refers to when writing to his best friend, Count Louis de Seze, about this time:

"I am delighted that you have started a conference of St. Vincent de Paul in your parish. It is a work which does immense good, and especially in reconciling the poor to the rich and bringing back souls to God. * * * My life here with my wife and children is a most happy and peaceful one. I have got over the money difficulties which were such a trouble to me at Versailles and I do not owe a farthing to anyone. I live very simply, it is true, but we can live without running into debt, and that is a great thing: there are so many who have not bread to eat; I am even able to save a little for my dear poor, but I am often terribly sad at having nothing to share with them."

Beautiful sentiments these! He also gave up smoking to have more to give to his "dear poor." He himself was poor all his life, and was forever struggling to support his wife and growing family.

But his interest did not stop here. He tried many means to increase the utility of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Thus, he proposed a plan for the instruction of young soldiers and had it put through; he inaugurated military fetes to bring money for their work; he wrote a pamphlet on Sunday Observance (in which the men of France were notoriously slack), which was so good that the Bishop had it printed and distributed; he often got leave to take one of the regimental wagons and went through town collecting clothes, linen and other things for his poor.

And all his life de Sonis remained a member of the Society, taking an active part in Vincentian work, whether he was encamped in Italy or Africa or in some barracks in France.

Study and Vincentian work, of course, gave him no time to idle away like so many officers and men in the army. Thus, he writes at this time:

"I only meet my brother officers on parade, rarely enough at the Café. They think me very strange, I fancy, and, I have no doubt, declare that I am a Jesuit, which is the title they generally give to those who love our good God." And, nevertheless, he was respected by all.

He reveals, too, his principles on religious discussions. Though he was known to be absolutely fearless and unashamed of his Faith—for he had defended it openly when occasion demanded—he would never enter into a discussion.

"I have never had quarrels on this subject," he writes, "nor can I say that I have ever had anything to complain of, though this does not prevent my pitying with all my heart those poor young officers who do nothing but eat and drink and lounge around smoking their pipes. What a life!"

One more work he added to his lifelong practices at this time. It is so indicative of his great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament that it deserves special mention. It was the nightly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He himself describes it thus in a letter to his friend, Louis de Seze, in 1853. De Sonis was 28 at the time.

"I must tell you, my dear Louis, that we have had the idea to unite once a month in the nightly adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. We began on Shrove Tuesday this year, to try and make reparation to Our Lord for all the insults offered to Him. There are eight of us, and we meet very quietly, almost like conspirators. We thus pass delicious nights in a chapel of the convent of the Oblates of Mary. This evening, which is the Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, we meet again for the same purpose, taking care in each month to choose the vigil of the greatest feast. I have written to my Carmelite Sisters (two of his own sisters who had entered Carmel), so that they may join us in our little act of reparation."

We must remember that all this time his military duties were most exacting. Generally he was engaged in Cavalry drills and maneuvers and other duties from early morning till late in the afternoon.

In 1854 he was promoted to a Captaincy and ordered to Africa. It meant the first long separation from his wife and children, and his first taste of danger.

AFRICAN AND ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS

In 1854, therefore, we find him established as Captain of a squadron of Hussars at Mustapha Superieure, on the heights above Algiers.

The first danger he met was the cholera which was raging at Algiers. He suffered from loneliness. We quote from a letter he wrote to a friend:

"I am very solitary here, among people I scarcely know, and who do not in any way share my ideas. As soon as my daily military duties are over, as well as the officer's mess, I take my horse and I come home. There I read, write and meditate until evening. At first I found it very hard to accustom myself to this life. I love my wife and children so much that it seemed to me impossible to live away from them, but I have placed this at the foot of the Cross like all the rest. I hope also that I may be better for this new state in which Divine Providence has placed me. I think of the words of Holy Writ: 'I will lead him into solitary places and I will speak to his heart.' May I not be too unworthy to listen to that voice!"

Later, as soon as he could afford it, he brought his family over to Africa. His constant changes of command, however, from Algiers to Blidah to Kabylia, and the frequent expeditions against the Arabs brought them much trouble and anxiety.

Five years later war broke out between Austria and France, and de Sonis' cavalry squadron was recalled to take part in the Italian Campaign.

"This Italian Campaign did not please my husband," wrote Madame de Sonis. "But he was a soldier to the backbone, and he loved his profession with a sort of passion. As for me, though I was full of fear and anxieties I never ventured to hinder him—I do not mean from doing his duty—but from going wherever his wishes inclined him, however much I may have had to suffer in consequence."

Captain de Sonis set out at once. He parted from his wife and six children after Holy Communion, which they received together as usual. He offered his life to God and asked simply that he might do his duty.

After forced rides with his squadron, he was thrown into the battle of Solferino—one of the great battles of all times—on June 24, 1859. He thus describes his share in that battle in a letter to a friend:

"It was only toward evening that our division drew near the wood which concealed the enemy. To our right the troops of Marshal Niel were unable to cope with the very superior forces of the enemy, and the moment was extremely critical. Then our General received orders to charge. Our two squadrons were magnificent; the infantry above were watching us; the first squadron under Guyot was ordered to begin the attack, but the General's voice was drowned in the terrific noise of the near-by artillery. It had become so urgent to assist Marshal Niel's troops that General Desvaux ordered me to advance. I galloped up to him to receive his order. His voice was full of emotion, as if he was sending me to be sacrificed. He wished me not to charge until there was a general attack on both wings as well as on the center.

"I ventured to represent to him that, if we waited for that, our men would be picked off one by one by the Austrian sharpshooters concealed and protected by the wood, before our guns could reach them, and I begged leave to charge at once. He reflected for a second, then said:

"Yes, you are right. Charge at once."

"I flew back to my men and gave the order. Then I galloped forward with my heart as easy as possible and full of interior peace. I was ten paces before the rest, and was, therefore, a beautiful target for the enemy; but their balls did not touch me. Their infantry drew back as we galloped to them, and I tried to cut their column in half; but when we got to the wood, we found a magnificent square of Tyrolese, who opened fire on us at once, and seemed to surround us on every side.

"I tried to rally my cavalry against one of these serried masses, but they fell around me right and left, as if mowed down by the storm. Seeing my brave fellows struck down in this way, I flung myself against one of these squares and found myself in a position which I shall never forget—the bayonets shining like razor-blades all around me, while hundreds of bullets whistled about my ears. I was alone—one-half of my squadron were laid low, the other half were attacked on the flank by a band of Uhlans. My beautiful gray horse was fatally wounded; he had just strength to carry me out of that terrible square, and then dropped down dead.

"With my sabre I parried a bayonet thrust as I rose, and ran to our

lines on foot. One of my officers caught another horse for me, upon which I jumped to rally my men. I had started with a magnificent troop; I found them reduced to a mere handful. * * * But we saved the position and the corps of Marshal Niel, and maintained worthily our old reputation."

One of his officers, writing about this engagement, said that at the moment of the charge, he saw Captain de Sonis quickly pass his sabre to his left hand, make the sign of the Cross with his right, and crying: Forward, dash to the charge.

In the midst of the horrors of battle this intrepid soldier could say, "he did not think he had ceased for one moment to realize the presence of God." Looking over the scene of carnage after the fighting had ceased, and thinking of the bravery of those fallen and wounded lads, he could not help exclaiming:

"Oh, my dear friend, if only a part of this heroism had been devoted to the service of God, what a harvest for heaven!"

His first care, even before taking any rest, was for the wounded. He cared for their bodily needs as well as he could, but never forgot to remind them of their souls, and to help them to sentiments of contrition and resignation.

Shortly after the battle of Solferino, the war came to an end. Writing to a friend of his, Captain de Sonis said:

"God has miraculously preserved my life. May I employ it in His service and to His glory. That is my only ambition."

AFRICA AGAIN

Hardly had the Italian Campaign ended than de Sonis' squadron was ordered to Algiers to take part in an expedition against Morocco. A "holy war" had been declared by some Moroccan prophet and the French possessions were endangered.

There new hazards awaited him. The crafty foe had to be pursued through most difficult territory. When once the French troops left the great military highways around Algiers, they came at first into mountainous land where not a growing thing was to be found. Beyond lay the desert. All the rivers were dry; it had not rained for weeks. The sky seemed like brass. The constant and rapid movements of the Arabs made the French remain in their saddles practically day and night with but short rest, and often a dreadful insufficiency of water. Then cholera broke out. The men succumbed at the rate of a hundred a day.

Indeed, the situation was terrible. One of his officers describes the horrors of that expedition and incidentally, gives us a beautiful picture of Captain de Sonis.

"Everything is wanting here—chaplains, doctors, nurses, even water, for everything is dried up around us. But in the midst of all these miseries, Captain de Sonis is in his element, which is charity. The more violent the epidemic, the greater is his unselfish devotion. The only temporal or spiritual consolation the poor sufferers received was from him, for he never left the ambulances day or night. Even after their death, it was he who performed all the last sad offices for them. * * * But he never said a word of his own self-devotion. Once, at mess, someone mentioned the death of a Chasseur in our squadron who had expired that night, and Captain de Sonis was visibly affected. But he never said—we only found it out later—that he had passed the whole night by the bedside of that man and had never left him till he had breathed his last."

Fearless as he was before the enemy, he was likewise of the epidemic; and while all were in a panic, he alone never lost his tranquillity. He seemed to have no thought of contagion. Only one thing drove him, as a Christian, almost to despair: the Government had provided no chaplains for the expedition.

"My poor fellows," he wrote, "are dying like flies, and there is no one to say a word to them of God or of their souls. * * * I do what I can for these poor dying men, and oh, what noble souls there are among them! The moment they feel themselves attacked they turn to God, and many die as I should wish to die myself. Poor young fellows! I do all I can to encourage them, to speak good words to them, to give them my crucifix to kiss, and so on, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been my great help."

By November the campaign was at an end and the army returned to Algiers. "It was a funeral march," writes an eye-witness. "Every morning, before breaking up camp, we had to dig the graves for those who died during the night. On the road, the men fell from their horses. They were convulsed with agony for a few moments, and then died before any help could be brought." The good Captain wore himself out for his men; he seemed to have an iron constitution.

Early the next year Captain de Sonis had the consolation of return-

ing to his wife and children at Castres, France, for a short holiday. He wrote to his friend Louis de Seze:

"I need not tell you what happiness it was to me to be able to return once more, safe and well, to my dear little wife and children, after having been separated from them for more than a year. God has preserved me for the sake of these dear little ones whom I hope to bring up in His faith and love."

COMMANDANT DE SONIS

On his return to Africa in March, 1860, de Sonis was appointed Commandant of the Province of Tenez. As this position offered him some kind of a home, he sent at once for his wife and children. But it was his fate to have no resting place for any length of time, to the great suffering of his family, and to his own anxiety, for it entailed great expenses. After a few months he received the still more important command of Laghouat, only to be transferred, before the year was out, to Saida. In 1865 he returned as Lieutenant-Colonel to Laghouat, and in 1869 he was made full Colonel and appointed to the command of Aumale. In these places he was a sort of military governor, which brought him into close contact with the natives, who conceived the highest regard for him. This last command was beset with so many dangers that he resolved to send his family home to France. They, however, preferred to share his dangers with him. His plans, however, underwent a sudden change.

Within a few months of this appointment, the Franco-Prussian War broke out; de Sonis was recalled to France and appointed General of Brigade to command the First Cavalry of the 17th army corps. Then began his last campaign. The first news of disastrous defeats for the French army had already come and de Sonis, devoted patriot, pleaded impatiently for a chance to serve his country. He had no misgiving as to the gravity of the situation.

"I remember still," wrote Madame de Sonis, "the cry of joy with which he opened and read this dispatch. Alas! for me it was the beginning of mortal anxiety; our last happy days were at an end."

It was with mixed feelings that de Sonis set out on this campaign. On the one hand he loved France with all his heart; on the other, his heart bled to see in what irreligious and anti-Christian hands his country had fallen. This can be seen from a letter which he wrote about this time.

"When God gives us a lesson, He does it as a Master. Nothing is wanting to that which France is receiving at this moment. As for ourselves, let us only pray that God may be with us, and that He may give us the grace to die as Christian soldiers should, with eyes fixed on heaven, arms in our hands, face to face with the enemy, and crying: 'Long live our country!'"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HOLY FRIENDSHIP

The title is suggested by some paragraphs from a letter which St. Francis Xavier, then in India, wrote in reply to a letter from his spiritual father and former companion, St. Ignatius. St. Francis writes:

"O my true Father! I have just received at Malacca, on my return from Japan, the letter of your holy charity. . . .

"I have read there many words breathing all your sweetness and piety; I have re-read them many times for the comfort and the good of my soul . . . especially those last words, which are as it were, the seal of charity, and which conclude your letter: 'Yours entirely, so that no length of time will ever be able to make me forget you, Ignatius.' I have read these words with tears of delight, and as I write them I weep at the blessed remembrance of past days, and of the sincere and holy love with which you have always enfolded me, and which still follows me. . . .

"Your holy charity adds that you greatly desire to see me once again before the close of this life. Our Lord who reads the depths of my soul, knows the keen and sweet emotion of tender love which this affectionate expression of your precious love has aroused in my inmost heart.

"And as often as I turn over these words in my mind (which is very often), unbidden tears fill my eyes, and break forth gently and irresistibly at this one sweetest image on which my heart dwells,—that it is possible I may again clasp you in my arms: a thing difficult enough to bring about, as I see; but nothing is impossible to holy obedience."

Every street has many parents, but there is only a handful of fathers and mothers in a city.

An Age of Reading

F. T. G.

One cannot enter an office these days without finding the office boy or the stenographer poring over the pages of a book or magazine. In railroad trains it is the same thing that confronts the inquiring and inquisitive traveler. In homes one is also apt to find the lady of the house actively engaged in reading some of the latest. Household work might be waiting her hand, but the reading seems to be the first thing of importance. Going to the parks and strolling along the paths for pedestrians, one also meets with many who are engaged in reading books or magazines. And how much of the stuff that is being read is trash! The latest best seller, a serial treating of love, marriage, and consequent divorce, or even the mad inventions of someone who gives himself or herself out as a former investigator of the "underworld"—these things are the mental food with which almost the majority of readers are regaling their mind and heart.

The craze for reading is almost as great as the mad dash for pleasure of one sort or another: it is a passion that seems to have gripped people of every class. The child reads a Frank Merriwell or a Detective Story with an eagerness that is really astounding; the old grandfather reads; grandmother reads; father reads; mother reads; big sister reads; big brother reads; all read. High, low, learned and illiterate are caught in the maelstrom of this present-day passion.

It were indeed a thing of joy—if this craze for reading were on the part of all concerned a real indication of earnest study, of a thirst for information on necessary subjects, of a desire for real education. But the misfortune is that the things read are only too often real poison for the soul.

What appears to be a thirst for knowledge is nothing other than a morbid curiosity and an utter waste of time. This is apparent from the reasons often given for much of the time spent in this manner.

"I have so much time on my hands that I have to do something to keep busy and interested in things generally," said one matronly woman the other day. And yet, knowing this woman and her household pretty well, I was reasonably sure that her breakfast dishes were still unwashed.

"I have to kill time in some way, and I might as well read as do

something else that might be worse," said another. And this one had not even begun to comb her hair; her face showed traces of the previous night's rest; her home was in bad disorder at ten A.M.!

"It is a pleasure to read on the way to work." This from a dainty damsel painted to the utmost limit already—and continually adding more rouge and more talcum. Yet, she was not reading; merely holding an open magazine in her hands and seeing everybody and everything and commenting on the appearances of her daily companions on that early morning train ride as if she alone were the last word in following out the directions of the "ladies' " page of the sheet she was reading—rather pretending to read.

If it is detestable in adults to waste time, to seek the morbid in what they read, it surely becomes a crime in the young. These latter have enough to do with their allotted tasks for school or with their work in factory or office to keep their minds busy trying to figure out ways and means of advancing themselves. But that is and means "effort." And effort they do not want—just merely ease and to pass the time.

Moreover, this indiscriminate reading of stories and tales, interesting it is true, yet falsely colored and falsified in relation to actual fact—tends to destroy all love for solid and instructive reading and study. Many a coed at our Universities is spending her time in reading the latest or the Best Seller of the month. And the result: she simply cannot get down to her allotted tasks for the day or the week. These are so dull and dry; the others are so interesting and enchanting! Indiscriminate reading of trash ruins the mind and robs it of all desire for learning and truth.

Excessive indiscriminate reading makes many of its devotees real thieves of time—not indeed their own time, but that of the firm for which they are working. What is more distasteful than to enter an office on business and find the office girl reading a magazine? No, not the fact of the reading, but all else that goes with it: an unladylike manner of sitting at her desk; the unmannerly motion of the jaws while the huge portion of gum is being masticated or chewed; the uncivil address to the visitor; the rude and crude way of speaking; the air of defiance and "toughness" when the request of the entrant seems to threaten to dislodge her from her lazy posture; and a thousand other "little" items that one has to put up with from the incessant reader. There is not and cannot be that attention to the various "little" duties

that are expected of them by the very firm for which they work. This excessive indiscriminate reading ruins the memory, and the very same Miss will not remember that anyone was in that office, excepting in a vague way that gives no information to the employer, asking perhaps a description of the person who had called. Neither does such indiscriminate reading help the manners or the morals of the devotee. Often enough we find that the lassitude to which they give themselves while engaged in their reading breaks down the barriers of modesty and decency. This break never comes at one fell stroke on the part of the tempter. It comes gradually, insidiously, craftily—but almost surely in every case.

A noted German educator and college director says: "The reading of light literature—and most of our present-day novels and romances are just that and nothing more—is nothing less than a waste of time and an ill-disguised laziness." And Goethe, the great German poet, says: "This sort of reading leads to a vaccillating spirit and ends in passion. Such reading fosters shallowness of thought and judgment and a want of character in decision as well as a paucity of convictions and even of ideas of one's own."

Just as the idea of a Utopia fades and ends in sad disappointment in material things, so, too, must this kind of reading end in disaster. One cannot constantly live in an unreal world—even though it be but a world in thought—without suffering in the end. All that the imagination has conjured up of the bright sides of life must sooner or later be found to be an illusion. And illusory ideas render him who has them unfit for the stern realities of life. Time and again has this been proven by sad experience—and yet, there are those who will continue to poison mind and heart in spite of the warnings of those who know, those who have had experience. No matter what has happened to others before them, their case is going to be different.

And when we consider the matter that is offered, the scandals, real or imaginative, that are portrayed we almost sicken at the idea of the impression such things must have on the minds of the young. And are not these scandal sheets left out in the open where all in the family or in the house may pick them up and read?

It seems to be an almost universal idea of most parents of our day that the child can derive no harm from looking at such trash. They tell us that the child does not understand. It were well for such parents

if their contention were true. Unfortunately it is not true; and children learn in their youth what their parents did not even know on the day of their marriage. No harm done! All too much harm for the healthy, ideal development of any child—no matter how dull. The imagination is the cause of all the damage. And a child's imagination is particularly prolific in its productions.

The accountability of parents for the reading matter they allow their children is exceedingly great. And the more widespread the craze for reading and the more extensively the field of light literature is cultivated the greater must be their watchfulness in having regard to what their children read.

A certain novelist visited a prison one day. Imagine his surprise when suddenly one of the prisoners shouted out aloud: "That's the fellow who deserves to be wearing the stripes they have put on us. The reason why we are here is just the fact that we have followed out in practice the teachings he has given us in his rotten novels and love stories. We have only led a few others into wrong. This man has led thousands of his readers into evil-doing, and he is still doing it each day."

It is not hard to imagine the impression made on the novelist. Yet, did he withdraw his offensive works from the market? No, he went home and wrote more of the salacious stuff. No doubt he has had many more victims by this time.

Not so long ago a young woman, the daughter of a prominent family, shot herself. The mother heard the shot and sped to the room. But the girl was dead. Lying by her side was the very book which she had been reading. It praised the courage of those who adopt this method of getting out of a bad situation. She followed its doctrines.

One day I overheard a father complaining about his son's conduct. The latter had been arrested for his criminal affection for another man's wife. And the father who complained about his boy told me that the beginning of all this was made from the very day on which he, the father, detected his boy reading a book loaned him by a chum. And the chum had taken the book from the family library!

A young man, arrested for drunkenness, recently told me that he began the downward course at the age of fourteen. A novel brought the first real temptation. He gave in; and from that day on he was incurable.

The Redemptoristines

DAUGHTERS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

T. Z. AUSTIN, C.Ss.R.

We have just received a book, on the title page of which we read: "The Life of Sister Mary Celeste of the Will of God, of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer. By a Redemptoristine."

Our readers are familiar with the Redemptorist Fathers. Who are the Redemptoristines?

From the life of Sister Mary Celeste—an extraordinary and most interesting life—we quote the account of the Sisterhood of the Most Holy Redeemer or Redemptoristines.

THE FIRST PROJECT

The story of the first idea of the Redemptoristines is thus told by the author:

"It was in 1720 that Father Thomas Falcoja, a priest of the Institute known as the 'Pious Workers,' by order of his superiors, endeavored to bring back religious fervor to a convent in Scala (a little town lying on the hills above Amalfi, Italy), where religious observance had fallen into abeyance. Twelve young girls of the best families of the surrounding country eagerly asked for admission, and he gave them for their Rule that of the Visitation Order (founded by St. Francis de Sales), and was heart and soul in training them in the way of perfection."

In 1724 he admitted into this convent—Julia Crostarosa—under the name of Sister Mary Celeste. "The entrance of this novice proved to be not only the turning point in the fortunes of the monastery itself, but was to have much more far-reaching, nay, even world-wide results."

She was favored with visions in which Our Lord made known to her His will that a new order be established in the Church. It was to consist of two branches: one, imitating as closely as possible His Hidden Life of prayer and penance; the other, to reproduce His Missionary and Apostolic Career. She was told to communicate everything to her director.

Father Falcoja was most receptive. For a long time he had cherished the desire of founding an Institute along similar lines, but could never see his way to the accomplishment of this plan. Here it seemed to be given into his hands by God. At his wish, Sr. Mary Celeste

wrote down all she heard in her visions and Father Falcoja submitted it to the proper authorities for a decision.

They all agreed that the time had come for the new foundation and advised the Sisters to proceed in legal fashion. But Father Falcoja's superior interfered and peremptorily ordered Father Falcoja to desist and to have nothing further to do with the convent.

ST. ALPHONSUS

Thus matters remained till 1730. Meanwhile two events occurred that were to serve in God's providence, to bring about the foundation of the new order. The one was the appointment of Father Falcoja to the Episcopal See of Castellamare, leaving him free to aid the Sisters at Scala again; the other was Father Falcoja's meeting and forming an intimate friendship with a young priest at Naples—Don Alphonso de Liguori.

Soon after his consecration as Bishop, Falcoja sent Alphonsus to Scala to resume the work of projecting and establishing the new order. Alphonsus approached the work with a decided prejudice against Sister Mary Celeste and her ideas. A thorough investigation of the matter, however, and an apparently miraculous cure, brought to him the conviction that God's will was manifest. One difficulty still lay in the way. The Bishop of Scala was opposed to the change. But Alphonsus gained his confidence to such an extent that he gave him all necessary permissions:

"Organize the community," the Bishop said to Alphonsus at parting, "as seems best to you for the glory of God."

Alphonsus lost no time. He preached a retreat to the Sisters on the life and virtues of the Most Holy Redeemer, and at the close, on Pentecost Sunday, 1731, the whole community accepted the new Rule, which had been worked out on the basis of the revelations given to Sister Mary Celeste. On August 6, of the same year, Sr. Mary Celeste and six of her companions, were clothed in the habit of the new order—a red habit and blue scapular and mantle. The order of Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer, or "Redemptoristines," was finally launched.

The Bishop gave his sanction. The rule was put into practice. But in 1733 new troubles developed. The Bishop of Scala, dissatisfied with some change which Msgr. Falcoja had made in the rules, and resenting Falcoja's direction of a convent that lay in his own diocese,

called Alphonsus once more to revise the rules more in accordance with the original draft.

Falcoja, however, persisted. Some of the Sisters adhered to his views, and acting under his advice, finally excluded Sister Mary Celeste from the community she had been instrumental in founding. It was a hard blow, but she bore it like a Saint. Her work was destined to come through.

Falcoja had all copies of the Rule burned (except one which was preserved secretly by two saintly sisters), and from 1738 to 1741 his Rule was used. But in 1741, after the death of the Bishop of Scala, Sister Mary Celeste's original rule as revised by St. Alphonsus, was reinstated and finally approved for the Institute by the Holy See, in 1750.

A DAY IN A REDEMPTORISTINE CONVENT

In order to give an idea of the life of the Redemptoristine Nuns, we quote the brief account given by the author of the life of Sr. Mary Celeste of the Will of God.

"The religious rise at 4 or 4:30 a.m., according to the season or country in which they dwell, and begin the recitation of the Divine Office, according to the Roman breviary, at the hour when those who rise at night have finished their praise of God.

Meditation, Mass, and Holy Communion are followed by breakfast, after which comes manual work. The Little Hours of the Office, the Examen, and a short spell of free time bring them to the early dinner and an hour's recreation in common.

The three hours' silence in memory of our Lord's Agony on the Cross lasts from 12:30 till after Vespers, which are said or sung at 3 p.m. These hours are divided between work, spiritual reading, and the second half hour's meditation appointed for each day.

Work in the cells, Benediction, Compline, and half an hour's free time find their place till the supper bell rings. Another recreation and night prayers bring to an end a well-filled day, in which there is not much room for idleness.

According to the wish expressed by our Lord, each of his virtues is honored in a special manner during the recurring months of the year. Fraternal Charity, making the members of the community but one heart and one soul in His love, which in turn they are to pour out on poor sinners; Holy Poverty, insured by the exact observance of the common

life; Purity of Heart; Meekness and Humility; Mortification; Silence and Recollection, the practice of which is rendered easier as the nuns remain so much alone in their cells or employed in the duties of their charge, only assembling together in the choir and refectory and at the time of recreation; Prayer and Love of the Cross, without the practice of which any imitation of the life of our Lord would be a delusion.

THE HABIT OF THE ORDER

The habit is, as we have said, red; the choir mantle and scapular azure blue, and to this latter is attached an oval picture of the Most Holy Redeemer, to remind the Sisters that while exteriorly they strive to imitate His life, they must always carry the memory of Him in their hearts. The rosary at their girdle calls to their mind that their life must be one of prayer and intercession; while the ring on their finger, engraved with the words "Ego te sponsabo," tells them that all the love of their hearts must be for their heavenly Bridegroom, who has condescended to choose them for His own. The black veil is a sign not only that they are the spouses of a crucified Lord, but that they are dead to the world for His sake.

WHY A NEW ORDER

Some may ask why a new Order should rise up in the Church, already so richly endowed with those of the Poor Clares, Carmelites, Carthusianesses, etc. Why add a new one, apparently differing so little from these others? To them, all contemplative Orders seem almost, if not quite, identical, though in reality they differ widely, not indeed by the fact of more or less austerity, or that some rise for the midnight office while others say it in the small hours of the morning, but in the fact that each separate Order mirrors forth for the world one or other aspect of our Lord's life on earth.

The Carthusians and their Sisters remind us of His life of solitude and silence, of the days and nights spent far from the haunts of men in "the prayer of His Father." The poor children of St. Francis proclaim aloud His love of and choice of holy poverty as His lifelong companion. The Redemptoristines were to imitate as closely as possible the hidden, obedient, detached life of Jesus at Nazareth, and in their hearts to re-echo His cry upon the Cross, "I thirst" for souls. While the Redemptoristines call to our mind the vision of the God-man going about teaching and preaching and healing all manner of (spiritual) diseases, their Sisters were to unite with them in their works by prayer

and penance, thus winning graces for poor sinners by the double apostolate of work and prayer.

HISTORY OF THE ORDER

For almost a century the order was limited to the two houses in Italy, and precarious enough was their existence, under the constant interference and opposition of the Neapolitan Government. But in 1831 the first convent north of the Alps was founded at Vienna. True, they were ousted, here as elsewhere, by the Revolution of 1848, but they returned. In 1841 the first foundation was made in Belgium, whence they passed to France. Today Holland possesses four houses of Redemptoristines; Spain two; Brazil one; and in Canada they have a monastery under the shadow of St. Anne de Beaupré.

In 1859 they established a house in Dublin, and from there passed to England. At present the Redemptoristines possess twenty-four houses and between 700 and 800 Sisters.

It was to this order that there came in 1900 Marie van Eeckhoudt, who as Sister Mary Celeste of the Will of God, led a life of unusual holiness. The book from which we have quoted freely is the edifying and interesting biography of this nun. Portraits such as these can only do the greatest good to all, not only the Sisters in convents, but in particular to our boys and girls. Such lives will teach them the beauty and power of holiness.

A TIMELY REFUTATION OF AN OLD ARGUMENT

Addressing a Holy Name meeting recently at Buffalo, New York, Bishop Turner of that diocese said:

"I cannot afford to let myself despise any man or woman that seeks my advice in matters of conscience. But I do honestly despise the type of Catholic who complains, whining, that he has failed or is failing in business because he is a Catholic. 'My competitors are not Catholics,' he says, 'and they can do as they please. I must go to Confession, and if I do as they do I must make restitution.' That is cowardly, that is traitorous, that is excusing his own ignorance, indolence or other bad qualities by blaming the Church. No, I do not think that any Catholic can honestly find his religion a handicap in attaining real success. I said I would bar politics, and I do, at this moment most pointedly. But, outside political success, there is no kind of success which you cannot attain all the more certainly, all the more easily, all the more permanently, than by the aid of those qualities which our religion inculcates."

Annam

THE LAND OF BLESSED VENARD

J. G. BOLGER, C.Ss.R.

It is an axiom that history repeats itself. If we recall the story of the early days of the Church we will notice that where persecution raged most fiercely, there it was that the Church took firmest root and the Christians were most devout. So it is today.

Annam, or French Indo-China, is perhaps the fairest mission in the Church. For two centuries persecutions, which a Nero could not surpass, filled the land with horror. Only a few years back the Church has raised to the altar Theophane Venard and thirty-three other Annamite martyrs who suffered less than seventy short years ago. Their blood was not spilt in vain. Today Annam has over 1,175,000 Catholics, and, relatively speaking, is particularly strong in native priests and native Sisters. Dominicans, Jesuits, and the Paris Foreign Mission Society have sown the seed and nurtured the seedling; and now the Redemptorists from Canada have been called in to revive and accelerate the growth.

The Annamites, among whom these Fathers have taken up their work, are as a rule of low stature, but stout, and look like brown Chinamen. They are kind and gentle, lovers of peace, and somewhat inclined to be poets. That they are very religious is shown from the fact that Annam is dotted with Buddhistic Temples interspersed with Christian churches. A great show and noise is made at all celebrations, religious or otherwise. Processions with triumphal arches, cannon and fire-crackers are always in place.

The following letter of Father Cousineau, C.Ss.R., to his mother, will present to you a detailed picture of Annamite life.

"The town of Hue does not look at all like a Canadian town. One sees nothing but trees. The houses are very small and hidden under the foliage. There are electric lights, but no trams. I have seen a few autos but no horses.

"The usual vehicle for traveling in town is the 'push-push,' a little cart drawn by Annamites, male or female. Annamite women do outdoor work as well as men. Besides, there is little to do indoors. Meals are soon ready; they generally consist of a little boiled rice. Nor does

the house require much care; it is a little straw hut supported by a few wooden posts, with neither floor nor windows. To admit light, a side of the house is thrown open.

"Annamites generally have no other clothes than those they are wearing. Male and female costumes are practically the same; trousers and a sort of dress falling to the knees. Fashions do not change—and there is no need to say that this is a great saving. Women are modestly clad with closed collar and sleeves reaching to the wrists. Men and women, even the nuns, go about barefooted even in church. The altar boys are also barefooted even to serve Mass.

"The hats of the Annamites are made of grass and look like an umbrella. When it rains, they wear a waterproof made of leaves. Annamite bedding and sleeping accommodations are not complicated: it all consists in a few boards: no mattress, no sheets, no quilt; a mat is merely thrown over the boards. Such is our bed also. It is quite economical and keeps off the heat. The first night, you find it rather hard, but you soon get used to it and sleep like a top. Europeans and Canadians wrap themselves in a blanket. We also place a mosquito net over our beds to keep off mosquitoes, our inseparable companions throughout the year.

"The Annamite people are very poor as a rule. They live from hand to mouth. Many of them are beggars and some die of hunger. In towns, Europeans eat about the same food as we do in Canada: meat, vegetables, fruit, and such things. Bread is very expensive: one dollar and twenty cents for a six pound loaf, the flour being imported from France or America. In country places, there is none to be had; it is replaced by boiled rice—the Annamite staff of life. The natives eat it with two little sticks. Knives, forks and spoons are unknown luxuries in Annam. Butter is scarce, very expensive and not always good, so we seldom eat any. There is only canned milk, which is not very tempting. The few Annamite cows give no milk; they are raised for the market.

"Do not imagine, however, that we suffer from hunger; we have all we want. Of course, we are poorer than in Canada, emulating the local priests who live on very little. I assure you there is no luxury in their rectories. They live like the faithful, in straw huts with neither floors, nor windows; and within, it rains almost as freely as outside. Like their flock, they live on rice and a little pork. They often go

about barefooted and their wardrobe is no better stocked than that of the natives.

"Most Annamites are pagans, but conversions are frequent. A few days ago, I went to a neighboring parish and baptized some thirty grown-ups. Once converted, Annamites make good Christians, as is evidenced by their large number of martyrs whose graves are to be met with everywhere. But conversions would be still more numerous if funds were not lacking. Before being admitted to baptism, catechumens must be instructed. This takes about a month. Meanwhile they cannot work; and, as Annamites have no savings, the pastor has to feed them. This costs about five dollars a head. Now when there are thirty of them, pastors cannot foot the bill, as they have no revenues. Baptism is then postponed and the pagan often gives up the idea of becoming a Christian. How much good could be done with a little money!

"I am beginning to learn Annamite. It is very difficult, yet I hope to master it sufficiently to preach and hear confessions. I am very fond of the Annamites; they are so civil and amiable."

Annam, it may be added by way of elaboration of this picture, is covered with villages surrounded by rice fields, each village shaded by trees, provided with a Pagoda and perhaps a Christian church; each is full of poverty and squalor. All the churches are Annamite in style with some beautifully decorated with lacquer. Cities like Haiphong and Hanoi are much like any neat French city, except for the turbaned rickshaw men. A short drive, however, from the center of a large city, will bring one to the villages and rice fields again. The churches in the cities are well built and well cared for.

The better dressed in the cities differ from their rural brethren. "The men wear a black suit of thin cloth, buttoned diagonally across the breast and reaching to the knees, with wide, white pantaloons, white socks and black shoes. Around the forehead and covering the base of the head, they wind a long folded cloth into a turban that leaves the top of the head exposed. The women wear dresses well below the knees. They do love big hats and even the poorest can be seen with one on her head or carrying it. This hat seems to be well made, and its diameter would easily equal that of a flour-barrel top.

"Here is a picture of a real Annamite sport. Socks, sage green; trousers, white cotton, very wide; coats, outside of embroidered black silk, lined with light blue and fastened with gold buttons at the neck;

inside, two coats of bright colors, similar in form to the outside, the flaps being adroitly turned so as to disclose the possession of both; head-gear, a black silk turban. Under the outside coat is occasionally displayed a pig-skin purse or belt where money and cigarettes are kept."

The Annamite language is very difficult, being akin to Chinese. Father Larouche, C.Ss.R., writes:

"A word may have four or five letters but it constitutes but one syllable, one sound. Aspirations abound, making it easier for English-speaking people to master. But aspiration is not everything. The soul of Annamite is the intonation peculiar to each word. While speaking, one's voice must rise and fall, drawl, stop short, run up and down the scale, so that it is quite an advantage to be a good singer. All the more so because there are secondary modulations, when prayers, beads for instance, are said in common."

"A visiting American would find much of startling interest in Annamite habits and customs. When you see a group of them in the street you notice that every mouth is in motion, disclosing a black cavern. Everyone's teeth are enameled blue-black and they are all chewing betel-nut which causes much expectorating and stains the corners of the mouth. They say it is somewhat of a jolt to step into a girls' school, for instance, and see a row of grinning pupils all with black mouths.

"Their church customs also differ from our own. Both men and women wear their turbans in church and the little ones are dressed like their parents. The Annamites, like the Chinese and Japanese, like to recite their prayers aloud. Sometimes the noise in church is deafening. After the Benediction before the "Laudate Dominum" is begun, there is a humming sound, breaking into a soft rapid chant and falling back into a hum. It is the Latin of "My Lord and my God!" They do the same after the Consecration at Mass; and while Holy Communion is being distributed, the chant is "Domine non sum dignus"—"O Lord, I am not worthy!" Annamites always loiter in church after services and often remain hours at prayer.

"I have said that Annam is perhaps the most consoling mission in the Church. The people are truly religious, pagan temples abound and in some sections a good many Christian churches are seen. The missionaries in Annam today are the Dominicans and Foreign Mission Society of Paris. These zealous men are helped by a fine staff of native

priests with the Redemptorists to renew the spirit in all the people—clergy and lay, by missions and retreats.

"Vocations abound, especially where a 'Domus Dei'—'House of God'—is located. This is an institution that is peculiar to the Annamite missions. Briefly, the 'Domus Dei' is the home of the rector of each parish to which are attached three, four or more catechists who have charge of ten, twelve or more boys from ten to twenty years of age. These boys are instructed by the catechists in those fundamentals necessary to enable them to enter the seminary or catechist school. The boys support themselves by working on the land attached to the mission. The life in this 'House of God' is truly edifying. Father Walsh of Maryknoll says it recalls the days of the early church when the faithful had all things in common and lived in peace and concord.

"Moreover, Annam has besides, thirteen preparatory seminaries and twelve major seminaries, all crowded; and if poverty were not so prevalent there would be more. Religious life in these Seminaries is truly ideal.

All the large mission centers, together with seminaries, are in charge of foreign clergy, while the smaller city parishes and country districts are in charge of the Annamite priests. To promote the fervor of the native priests for the Blessed Sacrament, "The Messenger of the Blessed Sacrament" is published. Where the Spanish Dominicans are in charge a mission is given in every parish every five years and the native clergy is given a retreat every year.

Among the lay people there are three great organizations which help to promote the fervor, namely, the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, the Confraternity of the Scapular and the Third Order of St. Dominic. The special work of the Redemptorists is to renew the fervor of the priests, nuns, and people by preaching retreats and missions.

The Annamites have a great regard for education. In every village there is a Buddhistic school which, with the French public school, does its utmost to counteract the work of the mission school. Each one of the eleven vicariates has its larger Christian schools for girls and boys, and each parish also has an elementary school of some kind.

Institutions of charity flourish in all the missions, orphanages, hospitals, and asylums for lepers. Most of these, as well as the girls' schools, are in charge of the native Sisters, "Lovers of the Cross."

This is a congregation without vows under the bishop in each vicariate. They have done wonderful work and during the cruel persecutions were the bravest of martyrs. No other modern Sisterhood has a nobler record for suffering for the faith. The foreign sisters of St. Paul of Chartres and the native Dominican Sisters of the Third Order do work equal to that accomplished by the "Lovers of the Cross," but are not so numerous.

Many difficulties face the Church in Annam; the greatest by far is poverty. It is only by buying land and giving it to the neophytes that converts can be made. The next great obstacles are the irreligious French and Buddhistic schools. A short time ago the French government attempted to oust all the nuns from their hospitals but happily did not succeed. The loose conduct of Europeans is another great obstacle. The Christian spirit flourishes best far away from European influences. Despite all these difficulties, in the reports of each of the Bishops to Propaganda in Rome, to the question "What hope of progress?" each answer was "Good" or "Very Good." It is here that the harvest is truly ripe but the reapers too few. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to send this land many more good laborers.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

A Catholic London bus conductor, W. Gerald Young, contributed one of the principal winning essays on the meaning of life which have been appearing in the Daily Express.

Mr. Young's answer to the reason for human existence was simplicity itself.

"If you seek the real answer," he writes, "you must journey . . . to a place where little recruits are being trained to soldier their way through this battle of life. Come with me to the infants' class in an elementary school, select and interrogate the smallest child, and from him you will discover that the problem of existence is not difficult to understand."

"Who made you?" you ask.

"God made me," he replies, with the aid of his catechism.

"Why did God make you?"

"God made me to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next."

"There you have life's mystery unravelled in simple language. Live up to its doctrine and you will learn the secret of happiness."

The Modern Tarcisius

LIVE CHRIST THE KING!

FROM A MEXICAN MAGAZINE

Throughout the miserable prison there reigned that day a strange agitation. Rumors were current,—horrid rumors,—of sudden and strange deaths. Innocent prisoners disappeared as it were by enchantment,—without leaving the least trace of themselves: their death was caused by injections of strong poison.

Senor Betanzos, youthful, of good family, a prisoner because of his pronounced Catholic Faith, prepared himself for martyrdom. Accused of complicity with the forces fighting for their freedom, he refused to say any word that might incriminate anyone even though he might buy his liberty. Long ago, indeed, desirous of defending Christ the King, had he made the painful sacrifice of leaving his beloved wife and little son.

With him in prison was his friend and helper,—a heart of gold that beat in unison with his own. They were placed in neighboring cells, and by means of taps on the wall, they were able to keep in touch with each other. But now for long hours he had received no sign from his companion. Early that morning, it is true, he heard a slight murmuring from his cell,—then the most poignant moaning,—the mournful, haunting cries of a soul departing;—then,—nothing but the silence of death.

No wonder that amid the hardships of the prison and the dread uncertainty hanging over the place, Betanzos' spirits drooped. He must have some means to raise his failing spiritual forces. He thought of the Sacraments,—of Holy Communion especially.

But, at that moment, nothing seemed so absolutely impossible.

Just then he saw approaching the wall of his prison a woman who seemed to be trying to attract his attention. Finally he recognized her as an old servant in his home. Without hesitating an instant, he wrote a brief note on a piece of paper. It read:

"I may disappear at any moment just like the rest. I beg you, for charity and for the love of God, get me Holy Communion—Betanzos."

He threw the paper down to her. He saw her pick it up and hasten away.

II.

It was not in some dark, damp, subterraneous chamber; no, it was a dwelling bathed in light,—even richly furnished,—in which, perhaps, gold was not wanting,—and still, it was a catacomb.

In the midst of an imposing silence,—surrounded by a group of some twenty men and women, the Bishop was offering the sacrifice of the Mass in a private home. The little group followed the sacred mysteries with wrapt attention.

Among the attendants was a little lad,—he could not have been more than eight years old; his eyes glowed like two burning coals; his lips, delicate and curved, trembled with pent up emotion . . . Nearer and nearer came the solemn moment of Holy Communion, which he was receiving that morning for the first time . . . After it, he must undertake a sublime enterprise: to him was committed a secret and noble mission,—to carry Christ the King under the sacramental veils, to the prison, to his own father.

The little lad, kneeling before the Bishop had asked this favor with much insistence and with all the eloquence of a child's tears. The Bishop was moved. . . . It seemed to him to be an evidence of the Will of God. . . .

Now the boy had received Christ the King into his heart. He knelt there radiant like a cherub. It brought tears of deep emotion to the eyes of all who saw him: for they felt a presentiment that this first Communion would be the boy's last. Who knows, that very day, perhaps they would see the bloody scene of Saint Tarcisus repeated.

Meanwhile the Bishop, taking a cloth of linen and gold, reverently enclosed in it a consecrated host, and placed it in a hidden pocket in the boy's blouse, just over his heart.

The Bishop blessed him. Mothers in the little group hastened forward to kiss the brow of the noble lad as he started on his perilous journey.

III.

Before the prison gates a group of soldiers lounged, singing their ribald songs. Suddenly they stopped. A little lad approached and as they crowded around him curiously, he asked to be led to the chief.

"You, Remigio," shouted the one in command to one of his comrades, "lead this brat to the chief!"

"Yes, sir!" replied the one addressed, taking the boy by the arm.

The boy found himself in the office. Slouched in a great big chair sat a man, small of stature, fearsome of mien, apparently rough and unfeeling. The tears started to the boy's eyes unbidden.

"What's the matter," shouted the man with harsh voice. "Have you been lost here? What are you looking for, boy?"

"I would like to see my father," replied the lad, taking heart,—“to kiss him for the last time.”

"And who is your father?"

"Don Louis Betanzos," answered the boy modestly.

"Ah, yes,—that bird of some account," murmured the man. "Well,"—he continued as if some sudden inspiration had come to him; "well,—why not,—and you can thank the devil that you found me in good humor. . . . But listen,—I must first 'disinfect' you,—for safety sake."

So saying, he stepped down to the boy, and began to tap him from head to foot, as if searching him. The boy began to tremble like a leaf, fearing that the terrible man might find the Sacred Host and profane it. . . . Of a sudden he felt his wrist pierced as with a sharp instrument,—a muffled cry escaped him.

"Shut up!" shouted the chief; "it's nothing,—I just wanted to see how brave you are. . . . Go now, and see your father."

Don Louis was astonished to see his boy enter his cell. He closed the door and father and son lay in a close and tender embrace. . . .

"Quick, father," said the little lad, reverently taking out of his pocket the Sacred Host,—“there is no time to lose. Today was the day of my first Communion, and I fear it will be my last.”

"What makes you say that my boy?" asked the father.

"Quick, papa, quick," repeated the lad, and, in a loud voice he began to recite the act of contrition. Don Louis, as if obeying a higher power, knelt and joined in the prayer. Then, with sentiments of deepest humility, he received Christ the King. Father and son knelt together to thank God for this well night miraculous answer to his prayers.

But it was not long before Don Louis noticed that the lad's body was beginning to tremble in a strange manner.

"What's the matter, my boy?" he asked tenderly.

"Ah, papa," he answered smiling feebly, "didn't I tell you? My last hour is come. Christ the King has given me a sweet reward for my first Communion." And putting his arm round his father's neck and resting his head on his shoulder, he added: "Goodbye, papa,—we'll

meet soon." Those eyes, that till now glowed like burning coals, closed.

Don Louis stood there like one transfixed with horror: in his arms lay the dead body of his boy. On the lad's wrist he noticed a wound; the veins were swollen. The boy had been poisoned in the office of the Chief.

STATE AND CHURCH—BUT NOT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

An editorial of the New York Times, commenting upon the resolution adopted by the convention of Southern Baptists which, in effect, pledged their Church to vote against Governor Smith if he is nominated for the Presidency, says:

"One can imagine the furious outcry which would be raised by Baptists both North and South, and by Methodists, Presbyterians, and all other Protestant denominations, if any assembly of the Catholic Church were to take a similar stand for or against any political party, or any possible candidate for the Presidency. It would be said that it was an attempt to undermine the very foundations of our Government. But the Baptists at Chattanooga seem to think that it is right and commendable for them to do what they would violently condemn in the Catholic Church."

Happily, the Times editorial says, the resolutions are not binding on the conscience of any Southern Baptist, adding: "When they are not compelled to submit even in questions having to do with faith and morals, it is not, probable that they will meekly acquiesce when told how to vote."

"Pictures by Fra Angelico . . . are full of religious sincerity. When one studies them faithfully, it is like a conversation about heavenly things with a tender and devout-minded man," said Hawthorne one day. And how many Catholic homes are without devout and holy pictures!

All pleasure must be bought at the price of pain. The difference between false pleasure and true is just this: for the true the price is paid before you enjoy it; for the false, after you enjoy it.—John Foster.

Abhorrence of lies is the test of character.—Spalding.

Catholic Anecdotes

A NON-CATHOLIC'S TESTIMONY

"During the Civil War," said the late Senator Vest from Missouri, "when I lay wounded on the battlefield, and the Yankee bullets were flying about so thickly that my friends could not come to my assistance, I saw approaching me a Sister of Charity. Through all the fury of battle, through the terrible fire, before which the bravest men quailed, this woman came as unconcerned as if she were walking in an ordinary drizzle of rain. I, who could well appreciate bravery in men, was perfectly amazed at this wonderful and unconscious exhibition of courage.

"She kneeled down beside me, offered me some whisky, and tended to my wounds, and all the time the bullets were singing and striking around us. And as I looked into this woman's noble face, I felt a shame in my heart, such as I have never experienced before or since, a shame for the horrible and disgusting thoughts I had been taught to harbor against these angels of the battlefield. In that moment, and amid the horrors of the battlefield, I learned in an instant a lesson which I have never forgotten, which was that a woman who could do that could not be what I had been taught she was.

"I regret to say that in many of our Sunday schools we have books intended to instruct our innocent children in the truths of religion, but in reality they poison the minds of the children against the Catholic Church. There are a number of Protestant book concerns which make it their business to furnish to our Sunday schools all kinds of books on anti-Catholic subjects, such as the "Murder of St. Bartholomew's," "The Inquisition," stories about runaway nuns and other disgusting literature. Is it any wonder, then, that I should have believed all this, when my father believed it, my mother believed it, and the holiest place to which I could look as a child, my church, made it regular business to imprint it upon my childish mind?

"From that time on I have taken every opportunity to defend your church, and to work against bigotry in my own, and I flatter myself that I have made many ashamed of themselves, as I was ashamed of myself."

When it is considered that this is going on all over the United States at this moment, we have probably found the greatest reason for the existence of bigotry and prejudice.—*Western Watchman*.

"JIMMY"

In an article written for the Catholic Press, Uncle Dave, lets an invalid soldier tell the brave story of Jimmy O'Brien. He writes:

"Jimmy O'Brien rooms next to me. Gas got him, too, but he is a fighter, is Jimmy. When the stretcher-bearer toted him back from the front lines the surgeons gave one look at him, dressed his wounds and told his sergeant-major to prepare his burial papers. Jimmy fooled them. He didn't kick in. He got transportation back to a hospital. They fitted him up with a cane and a cork leg and when his lungs got rid of some of the gas they shipped him home. He has been in a hospital most of the time since, but he didn't lay down and die. He learned to make baskets and tables and he has sent hundreds of dollars home to help send a kid brother through college."

HE DIDN'T QUIT

Another hero, with a lesson of courage, is Harry Curtis. Uncle Dave's correspondent tells about him:

"Harry Curtis rooms with me. Gas got him but he didn't quit. He was married just before he joined up in the army. When he got home he found his wife had been collecting his allotment but had been running round with someone else. When she saw he was a physical wreck she got herself a divorce and Harry has had to go it alone ever since. Of course it hit him hard, but he didn't decide to let the 'bug' in his lungs kill him off. He's up here, fighting and planning to get back to doing something useful some day."

A fair-minded woman is one who can listen to gossip for an hour and not believe a word of it; a good Catholic woman would not even waste that hour.

When your face spells failure it is of no use to talk of the glories of your Faith.

Pointed Paragraphs

NOW FOR VACATION

The school year is at an end. The school closed—the books laid aside—the regular daily routine finished. The boy—the girl—have a whole day—and day after day—at their disposal.

Do they know how to use it? Is it well to leave the matter entirely to them?

There is the gang—there are the movies—there are the public places of amusement—there is the atmosphere of pleasure and irresponsibility—there are the trashy books of the day—all influences that may be harmful to the boy or girl.

We want them to come from their vacation better prepared to continue the work of their development in mind, in heart, in character as well as in body.

It stands to reason, then, that they need some guidance. Parents cannot, dare not, be entirely careless of how their boys and girls spend their vacation.

More and more Catholic organizations, in union with the parish priests, are beginning to see that parental guidance is often entirely lacking or slack and misdirected. For this reason attempts are made by them to help the boy and girl to spend a vacation that will not be harmful to them.

But parents have a duty they dare not shirk.

VACATION—FOR RENT

Vacation comes from the Latin word *Vacare*—to be empty—to be for rent.

The youth's mind and will, so to speak, are for rent. Those who wish to occupy it are many—some good, some evil. The youth does not know them clearly—or under the spell of sudden liberty, is guided by the one that comes with brightest and pleasantest garb.

Help youth.

There are ever so many interests that can still be maintained even during the days of freedom: daily Mass, frequent reception of the Sacraments, household work, helping the home, family outings, good companionship, outdoor sports, vacation schools, and the advantages offered by Catholic organizations.

Why not use these and help youth find useful and beneficial tenants for his vacation days—tenants who will not ruin the furniture—the youth's mind and will and heart.

A THOUGHT IN TIME

Have you already decided to what higher institution of learning you are going to send the boy or girl who has finished the grades?

Here is a warning word from a non-Catholic and hence, from our standpoint, an entirely unbiased source, regarding American girls' colleges. The Rev. C. Leslie Glenn, who holds the position of Secretary for College Work of the Department of Education of the Protestant Episcopal Church, after a wide investigation, makes the following official report:

"The tone in them is more agnostic and more critical of religious institutions than it is in the men's colleges," he said.

"Whatever may have been the religious impulses that led to the founding of the great Eastern colleges, they have long ceased to play any part in the policy of the colleges. Faculties for the most part are apt to be anti-Christian in the fields of psychology, sociology and philosophy. There is even at times a mild persecution, as, for example, that of a professor who threatened with failure in his course any girl who 'cut' his class to go to a Good Friday three-hour service.

"Religious conditions in the American colleges are more alarming than most people suspect. Visitors to our colleges see them at commencement time, when an inspiring religious service, or at least an invocation and a blessing, are part of the proper order of events. Bishops and prominent clergymen can always get a hearing and awaken student interest. Parents whose sons and daughters return for the brief holidays do not find any particular difficulty in taking them to church on Sunday morning. College religion is sometimes judged by these occasions, and its more normal aspect is never studied.

"Rumors do occasionally reach the outside world of a complete

absence of church attendance, except where it is compulsory, of a general lack of interest in the missionary enterprise, except in the less sophisticated colleges, and of an amazing idealism that scorns almost all forms of organized religion. In general, however, people are not alive to the seriousness of the problem.

"A group of outstanding students writing a Christian creed for students left out all reference to the Church because they felt, as one of them put it, 'that there was more of Christ's spirit in the labor movement than in the Church.'

"The president of one of the Church colleges says that the Episcopal Church is being supported today by men whose sons and grandsons do not care a snap about it."

AN APOSTLESHIP FOR ALL

In an article on the Psychology of Converts, Father LeBlanc, S.J., says:

"A notable number of conversions were occasioned by acquaintance with some Catholic friend or colleague, by an accidental visit in a Catholic church or hearing a sermon, or by an enforced stay in Catholic surroundings. In such circumstances it is that, time and again, the Catholic Religion first steps before them in real life, so to speak; for it is not the theological explanation of our doctrines or the scientific solution of all difficulties that is the determining factor for many, but rather, the sight of Catholics who live in and by their faith." And he quotes some of the testimonies:

"Sickness," writes one, "forced me to spend a great deal of my childhood in the hospital of the Gray Nuns, and so I felt myself early drawn toward the Catholic Faith. It was its purity that awakened in me, even as a child, the yearning one day to belong to the Catholic religion myself."

"For four years now," writes another, "I am a member of the Catholic Church. I was led to it in the following manner: At that time I happened to be in a Catholic hospital in charge of the Gray Nuns. One day one of the Sisters, trying to comfort a patient, said: 'No matter how hard it is, my dear, we must bear all for the love of Our Lord.' Such words made me think; I reflected: Where does she get the strength to speak thus?"

Another patient, a soldier, declares: "I came to an artillery regiment where I was thrown together continually with Catholic boys. One companion, especially,—a man from Upper Silesia, made a great impression on me. He prayed much and always carried his rosary with him. From him I, too, learnt how to pray. . . . It was most touching to see how, one day, when he received news that his son had fallen in battle, on reading the lines, he knelt down and prayed. No complaint crossed his lips. . . . All this made a deep impression on me and made me think."

It is the old story: a little example goes a long way. The Apostleship of Good Example is one we can all practice and it is most effective.

THE LODE STONE

To the question what was it, in the Catholic Church, that attracted you most, it is quite remarkable that all the converts interrogated by Father LeBlanc answered unanimously,—the Blessed Sacrament.

The devotion of Catholics in Church, the reverence with which the Blessed Sacrament is treated especially at holy Communion, the solemnity and beauty of Catholic ceremonies, the ever open churches, the tabernacle, the perpetual light,—all these were mentioned, again and again, by both men and women as influences.

"One Sunday morning," writes one convert, "we drove to the city and visited a Church where Mass was just going on. It made the deepest impression on me and made me desire to investigate the teachings of the Church more thoroughly. I could not take my eyes off the Altar; for, priest and attendants were so devout that they seemed like angels. This drew me most powerfully. And with what devotion the children approached to receive Holy Communion! I had never seen the like in my church."

"I often went to the Catholic Church," wrote another who found his way into the fold, "because I was drawn directly to it; what it was, I don't know exactly—but, when I saw how Catholic Christians kneel with infinite humility before the Most Holy, I was always impressed anew."

It was the Blessed Sacrament. But even here, we cannot help noticing, that the medium is the good example of practicing Catholics.

Let deeds correspond with words.

Our Lady's Page

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

THE STORY OF PERPETUAL HELP

CLARENCE SEIDEL, C.Ss.R.

The chief character in the Picture is the Blessed Virgin Mary represented as the Mother of God. This we know from the large letters at the top of the Picture. In most Byzantine paintings Greek words or letters are met with, which give the names of the persons portrayed or the signification of the work. So here, above our Lady's right shoulder, we see the two Greek letters *MR*, which is simply an abbreviated form made up—by contraction—from the first and last letters of the word *meter*, meaning *Mother*. And over her right shoulder appear two more letters *TU*, again abbreviated from the word *Theou*, meaning of *God*. Putting both together we have *Mother of God*, or the name of the central figure of our Picture. Note the peculiar markings above the letters: these are used to indicate contractions, accents, and breathing-marks.

The Mother of God is shown only in half-figure, and in a standing posture. See how gracefully yet securely she holds her holy Child. An oval face, olive complexion, brown eyes arched over by beautifully brown eyebrows, finely drawn lips, small mouth, fingers slender and tapering—that is the Mother of God as we know her both in our Picture and in the records of early Christian tradition. "In a word," as Fr. D'Orazio, C.Ss.R., says in his Italian booklet, "Our Lady of Perpetual Help," which has been fittingly done into English by Fr. Connell, C.Ss.R., "our Lady is portrayed as the ideal type of Oriental beauty."

She wears a rich red tunic or dress, tightly fitting about the neck and wrists and banded with gold. A hyacinthine or bluish-purple mantle covers the head and falls in ample folds over the shoulders and entire person of our Lady. The plaits and folds are effected by golden tracings—note the same in the Child's mantle and tunic. It is further edged and banded with gold and neatly lined with green. At the elbow jewels are suspended on delicate golden strands. A green

coiffure, streaked with white, holds in the hair. On the forehead appear, directly in the center, an eight-pointed, well-defined star, and to the lower left a highly ornamental though less conspicuous cross. We wonder if the artist caught the designs from falling snowflakes, for there they are in rich profusion. And finally, an intricately wrought nimbus encircles the head. The jeweled crowns of Jesus and Mary were not in the original, but only added after some time, as we shall see later on in the story.

(To Be Continued)

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"I would like to make a public acknowledgment of petition granted through the dear Mother of Perpetual Help and the Venerable John Neumann."—Mrs. J., Chicago.

"Will you please publish thanksgiving in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Gerard Majella for two favors received through their intercession."—Mrs. McD., Omaha.

"Some time ago I made a promise to Our Lady of Perpetual Help that if my prayers were answered I would have it published in the Liguorian. Thanks to Our Dear Mother my prayer was answered and I beg you to help me fulfill my promise."—Davenport.

"Enclosed please find offering for a Mass in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help for wonderful help in a severe attack of stomach trouble. I asked not for myself but for the sake of my young ones, for I have no one with whom I could leave them. When the pain was most severe I said the "three Hail Mary's" and almost instantly I began to feel better. Nor have I had any pain since—and it is over three weeks ago since I had the attack. One more petition I have which however Our dear Lady does not seem to grant. However, I am in hopes.

Light meets with nothing contrary to its nature, for darkness is only the absence of it in places to which it has not penetrated. There is in nature no opposition to God, nor to the will of those who are united to Him.—St. Thomas.

Catholic Events

Reports published in the papers that the Holy Father, Pius XI, is ill, were denied by the Osservatore Romano, semi-official organ of the Vatican. Father Edmund Walsh, head of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, who visited the Holy Father to report on the work done in Asia Minor, Greece and Bulgaria, declared that Pope Pius looked more like a man of 52 than of 71, as he really is.

* * *

Secular press reports emanating from Rome during the past weeks, to the effect that a settlement of the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Mexican Government was about to be concluded, appear to have been premature. There is no doubt that the problem is again receiving the earnest attention of Pope Pius himself and the Roman Curia, but little hope of an early settlement is apparently being entertained at the Vatican.

Archbishop Ruiz y Flores, of Michoacan, Mexico, is in Rome, discussing all phases of the controversy with the Holy Father. The view apparently prevails that not much progress toward a settlement can be made while President Calles remains in office, since he is opposed to modifying any of the anti-Catholic laws which have been enacted during his administration. General Obregon, the only candidate to succeed Calles, is said to be more conciliatory and more inclined to restore some of the rights of freedom of worship.

* * *

Meanwhile the Rev. Mr. George L. Ferguson, a former Anglican minister and now in deacon's orders in the Catholic Church, who has just returned to Washington from Mexico, where he spent eleven months in the military barracks, has given a new and appalling account of the religious persecution in Mexico.

Eleven priests were lodged in the same cell tier in which he was incarcerated, Mr. Ferguson told the N.C.W.C. News Service, and during his stay, six of these were shot, two of them before his very eyes, and three disappeared mysteriously. A nun, also held captive in the prison, was stripped of her clothing, tied to the door of a cell and whipped to death in front of Mr. Ferguson and the priest prisoners.

The story of Mr. Ferguson's experiences really begins with his going to Mexico eight years ago to be associate pastor of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, an Anglican establishment in the capital. He had been an Anglican minister for five years at that time.

Some four and a half years ago, following a controversy with a Mexican Jesuit, Father Juan Acosta, whom he later saw put to death, concerning the validity of his orders, Mr. Ferguson embraced the Catholic Faith and in time was given deacons' orders by Bishop Mora, of San Luis Potosi.

At the first assembly of the Supreme Council of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith held at Rome this year, it was announced that the total collection for the year 1927-28 has surpassed the figure for 1926-27 by eleven and four-fifths per cent. Due to the intricate task of transferring the contributions of many nations into a single currency the official figure is not yet available; but the unofficial announcement is a total of 46,380,000 lire. The total for the year 1926-27 was 41,471,874 lire.

As in the preceding year, the United States leads among the contributing nations, recording an increase of 8 per cent over the figure of last year. Italy takes second place, with a jump of fifty-nine per cent over last year's figure.

The contribution of the United States for the past year amounted to 22,409,333 lire.

* * *

While many secular colleges and virtually all other denominational schools have turned their attention and efforts to the restriction of enrollments, Catholic institutions are meeting the great increase in college attendance by immediate and general expansion of facilities to accommodate all who are prepared to seek admission.

This is in substance, made in the Bulletin of the Department of the Interior Bureau of Education entitled "Higher Education," covering the biennial survey in this field for the years 1924-26. The Bulletin was prepared by Arthur J. Klein, Chief of the Division of Higher Education, who says the "Catholic Colleges are determined to meet the situation by expenditure of extraordinary energy and resources."

* * *

A distinctive Catholic background will welcome the National Convention of the Central Verein and of the Catholic Women's Union, which will be held in St. Cloud, Minnesota, August 24 to 29. The earliest pioneers of central Minnesota were of Catholic descent, and a number of them are listed among the most prominent people in the early history of the Northwest.

So far as known the first priest who visited this region was Rev. Francis De Vivaldi, who had come to the United States from Italy with Bishop Cretin of St. Paul in 1851, and who ministered to the Winnebago Indians as missionary.

The influx of German Catholic settlers, the result of which so distinctly characterizes St. Cloud and Stearns county even to the present day, came about in 1854 and the decade following, through the initial efforts of Rev. Francis X. Pierz, an Indian missionary at Crow Wing, north of St. Cloud, who early saw the agricultural advantages offered by this section. Accordingly, in several articles written for various German Catholic newspapers, he described the geographical location, and condition of the soil, woods, water supply, lakes and streams, etc., and urged German Catholics to settle here. The result was phenomenal. One paper, published in Cincinnati, was instrumental in directing over fifty Catholic families to this section in one season.

Bishop Cretin placed all the missions of central Minnesota under the spiritual care of Father Pierz, who at this time had reached the

age of seventy years. German Catholic priests were supplied as fast as possible, the first and most generous response coming from the Benedictine Fathers of St. Vincent's Abbey in Pennsylvania. Since then the number of Catholic parishes in Stearns county has increased to forty-six, many of which boast churches, schools and parish residences which would be a credit to the largest cities of the country. The population of Stearns county is over eighty per cent Catholic.

In 1873 Father Pierz, at the age of eighty-eight years, withdrew from the missions in central Minnesota and returned to his native country, the province of Krain, in Austria, where he died at the Franciscan monastery in Laibach, January 22, 1880, at the age of ninety-five years. But the result of his labors has endured, and today there is not a section of equal extent in the United States which is so overwhelmingly Catholic as the city of St. Cloud and the well-known county of Stearns, of which it is the county seat.

* * *

India has eight Archbishops, and thirty-eight Bishops in forty-six dioceses. There are 3,000,000 Catholics in India. There are 3,000 priests ministering to them, two thousand of whom are natives. An average of 40,000 converts are made each year.

This growth is having an effect on the lives of the entire people. The Church cooperating with the Government has brought about many changes. The general health has been improved and the marriage laws have been altered. The legal age for marriage now has been raised to 14 for girls and 16 for boys. Previously the ages were 12 for girls and 14 for boys.

* * *

The first hospital of the Order of Catholic Medical Missionaries has been opened at Rawal Pindi, India, and is dedicated to the Holy Family.

Besides caring for the sick, the staff, all of whom are women, will conduct a three-year training course for native girls. One member of the staff is a physician and a surgeon.

The Order of Catholic Medical Missionaries is composed entirely of women and was organized by Dr. Anna Dengel especially for the care of Mohammedan women. The headquarters of the order are at Brookland, D. C., and its members are physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and nurses.

* * *

The latest convert to the Church from the Anglican ministry in England is the Rev. Ralph Everard Owen, curate of St. Augustine's Church, Wembley. He is the son of the Rev. E. C. E. Owen, who was an assistant master at Harrow School for thirty-two years and formerly vicar of an East-end parish.

* * *

The annual retreat for Ladies to be held at St. Catherine's Academy, Racine, Wis., under the auspices of the Missionary Association of Catholic Women, will this year be held from July 9 to 13. Reservations should be made at the National Office, 834 Thirty-sixth Street, Milwaukee.

Lucid Intervals

It was dusk as she stopped at the roadside filling station.

"I want a quart of red oil," she said to the service man.

The man gasped and hesitated.

"Give me a quart of red oil," she repeated.

"A q-quart of r-r-red oil?"

"Certainly," she said. "My tail light has gone out."

"I hope they don't give my little boy any naughty nicknames in school?"

"Yes, ma, they call me 'Corns.'"

"How dreadful! And why do they call you that?"

"Cause in our class, you know, I'm always at the foot."

At a teachers' conference one of the school principals rose to propose the toast:

"Long live the teachers."

And a meager, pallid assistant instructor in a hollow voice asked: "On what?"

A carpenter, sent to make some repairs in a private house, entered the apartment of the lady of the house with his apprentice and began to work.

"Mary," said the lady to the maid, "see that my jewel case is locked up at once."

The carpenter understood. He removed his watch and chain from his vest in a significant manner and handed them to his apprentice.

"John," said he, "take these right back to the shop. It seems that this house isn't safe."

A school teacher wrote the following criticism on the edge of a boy's report card: "A good worker, but talks too much."

When the father signed the report card and sent it back, the card bore in addition to his signature this report, "You should hear his mother."

Peewit—What makes that old fool over there wear such long whiskers?

Dismuke—He made a vow not to shave until he got his new Ford.

Bill Lawler—"Ma, why did you buy these pants for me?"

Mother—Why what's the matter with them?

Bill—Well, they're tighter than my skin.

Mother—How could anything be tighter than your skin?

Bill—Well, I can sit down in my skin, but I'll be darned if I can sit down in these pants.

"I'll bet you a dollar you can't spell three simple words of one syllable, and I'll give you half a minute by the watch to do it in."

"All right; I'll take you. Let 'em come."

"Strength."

"Aw, that's easy—'s-t-r-e-n-g-t-h.'"

"Flight."

"That's just as easy—you can't catch me—'f-l-i-g-h-t.'"

"Wrong."

"No, it isn't wrong either. I guess I know how to spell 'flight.' You're trying to bluff me. Come across with my dollar. I win."

"No, your time's up. Why didn't you spell the third word 'wrong,' just as I told you? You stopped to talk too much. Now you'll have to get your money back by selling somebody else."

Bob—He can't fight!

Pete—Can't, eh? Say, when he swings and misses, the other fellow gets pneumonia.

Once a fly with a graceful flutter

Stopped to rest upon some butter,

It was soft

As tis oft—

Thereupon he floundered madly

Wanted to escape so badly

But was stuck—

Horrid luck:

Cook reached over, threw the butter

In the frying pan to splutter;

Fly was fried

'Till he died!

Underneath the steak he rested

And by someone was digested,

How unkind!

Nevermind!

Some Good Books

The Church Year. Its Seasons, Feasts, Fasts, Devotions and Other Observances. By the Most Rev. Archbishop Regis Canevin (former Bishop of Pittsburgh). Published by The Sign Press, Union City, N. J. Price, \$1.50.

Archbishop Canevin always took the deepest interest in the work of religious instruction. When he became Bishop of Pittsburgh, one of his first works was to establish the confraternity of Christian Doctrine, in which he gathered together a number of zealous young men and women to give catechetical instruction to children in the outlying districts, who would otherwise be deprived of a knowledge of their faith. He found time to prepare a special manual for their use.

When some years ago, ill health forced the Bishop to relinquish his office, he continued to carry on the work of instruction in a series of articles prepared for the Catholic press. The present book contains these fruits of his ripe experience.

As the complete title tells us, the book gives a brief but very pointed account of all the more important feasts and observances of the Church Year. It is really one of those household books which should find a place in every home, because of the interesting information it gives, and because it will enable the reader who glances at its pages every morning, to live in unity with the Church.

A History of the Seal of Confession. By Bertrand Kurtscheid, O.F.M., D.D. Authorized translation by the Rev. F. A. Marks. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo. Price, \$2.50.

Dr. Kurtscheid's book is a real delight for the scientific theologian; he cannot read it without feeling at once that the author has done a very thorough piece of work on a subject not without its difficulties,—and that he has succeeded in throwing some new light on more than one problem. Priests and seminarians will appreciate it. And, no doubt, educated laymen, interested in

matters pertaining to their faith, will read it with profit.

The introductory chapters summarize very neatly the best conclusions of well-informed history on Confession in the early Church,—especially on public penance and public confession. In three successive chapters the author then critically examines the Seal of Confession in its history up to the Thirteenth Century; the Seal of Confession in Canon Law and Theology; the Seal of Confession in Civil Law.

Literary Art and Modern Education. By Francis P. Donnelly, S.J. Published by P. J. Kenedy and Son, New York, Price, \$1.75.

Father Donnelly divides his book into three parts. The first he entitles: Humor and Criticism. In it, besides some very profound and interesting studies on humor and its various applications to Comedy and Satire, we find two good papers on the Language of Liturgy.

The second part, entitled Traditional Education, will be of special interest to teachers and educators, especially in secondary schools.

The third part: Standardizing, Testing and Trade Schools,—as the title already indicates, subjects to a careful scrutiny some much disputed matter concerning high school and college curricula and methods.

We are told that Father Donnelly has rounded out fifty years in educational work. This ought to be a pledge of the soundness of the views expressed in this collection of essays. While teachers will be more directly interested in this book, the average layman will find it well worth his reading. It is the work of a scholar. It is a live book.

Examination of Conscience for Boys and Girls. By A. J. Wilberding, S.J. Published by The Queen's Work. St. Louis. Price, 3 cents.

A little work prepared for The Catholic Instruction League. It has several very good features.

Redemptorist Scholarships

A scholarship is a fund the interest of which serves for the education of a Redemptorist missionary in perpetuity.

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